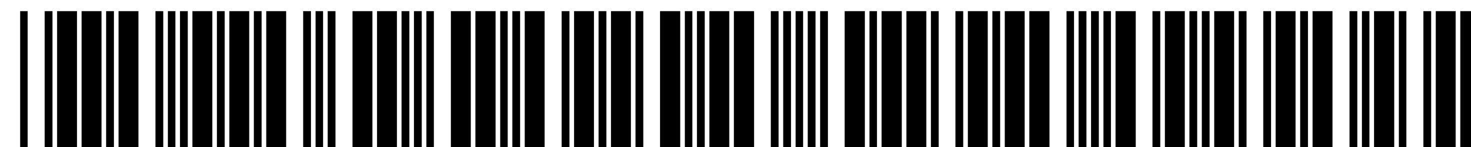

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Lee et al.

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(45) **Date of Patent: Jan. 3, 2017**

(54) **APPARATUS AND METHODS FOR TREATING A SUBSTRATE**

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H01L 21/67 (2006.01)

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CPC ***F26B 5/04*** (2013.01); ***H01L 21/6715*** (2013.01); ***H01L 21/67051*** (2013.01)

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See application file for complete search history.

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A substrate treatment apparatus is provided. The apparatus may include a process chamber configured to have an internal space, a substrate supporting member disposed in the process chamber to support a substrate, a first supplying port configured to supply a supercritical fluid to a region of the internal space located below the substrate, a second supplying port configured to supply a supercritical fluid to other region of the internal space located over the substrate, and an exhaust port configured to exhaust the supercritical fluid from the process chamber to an exterior region.

17 Claims, 6 Drawing Sheets

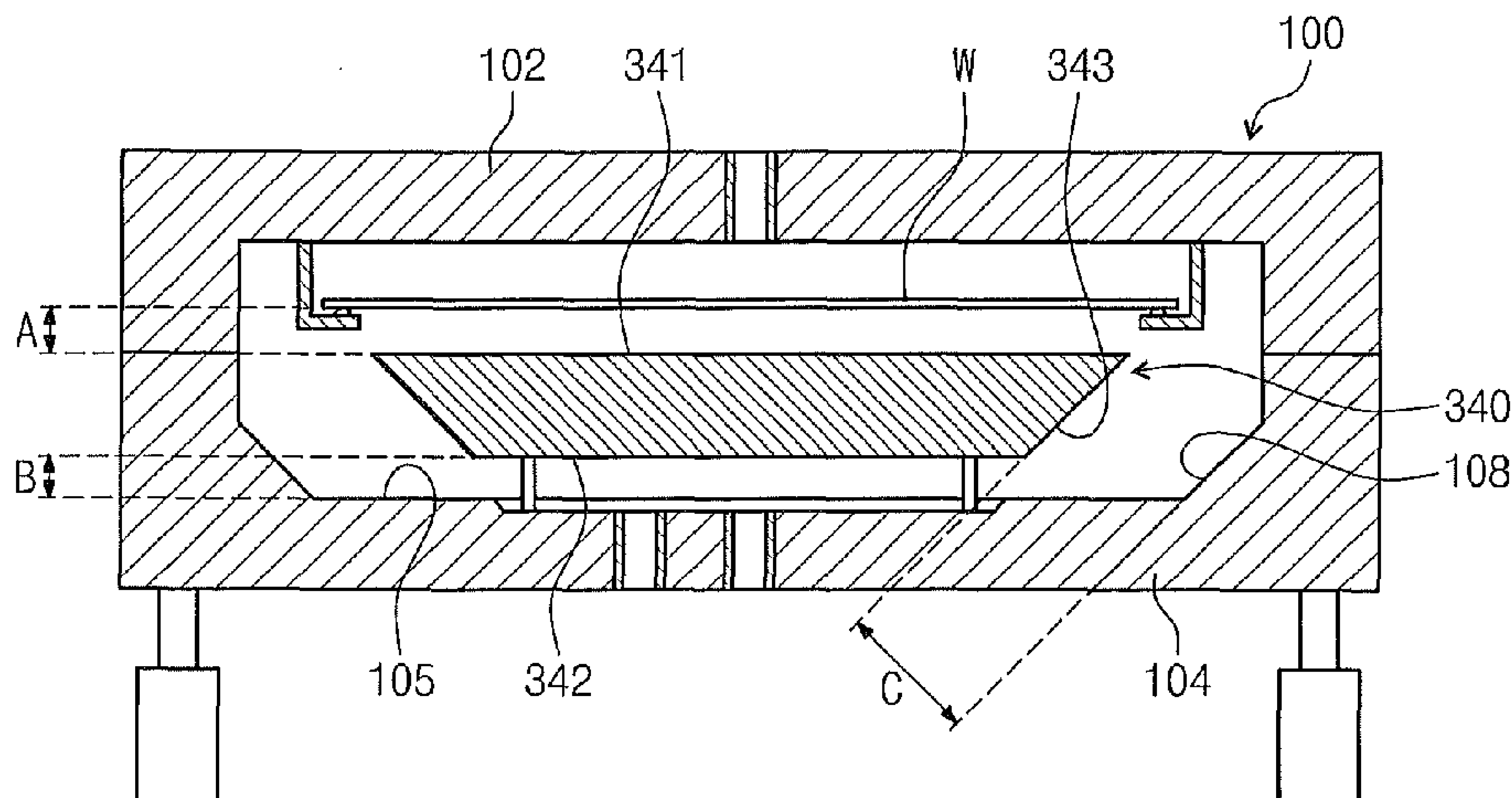

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Fig. 1

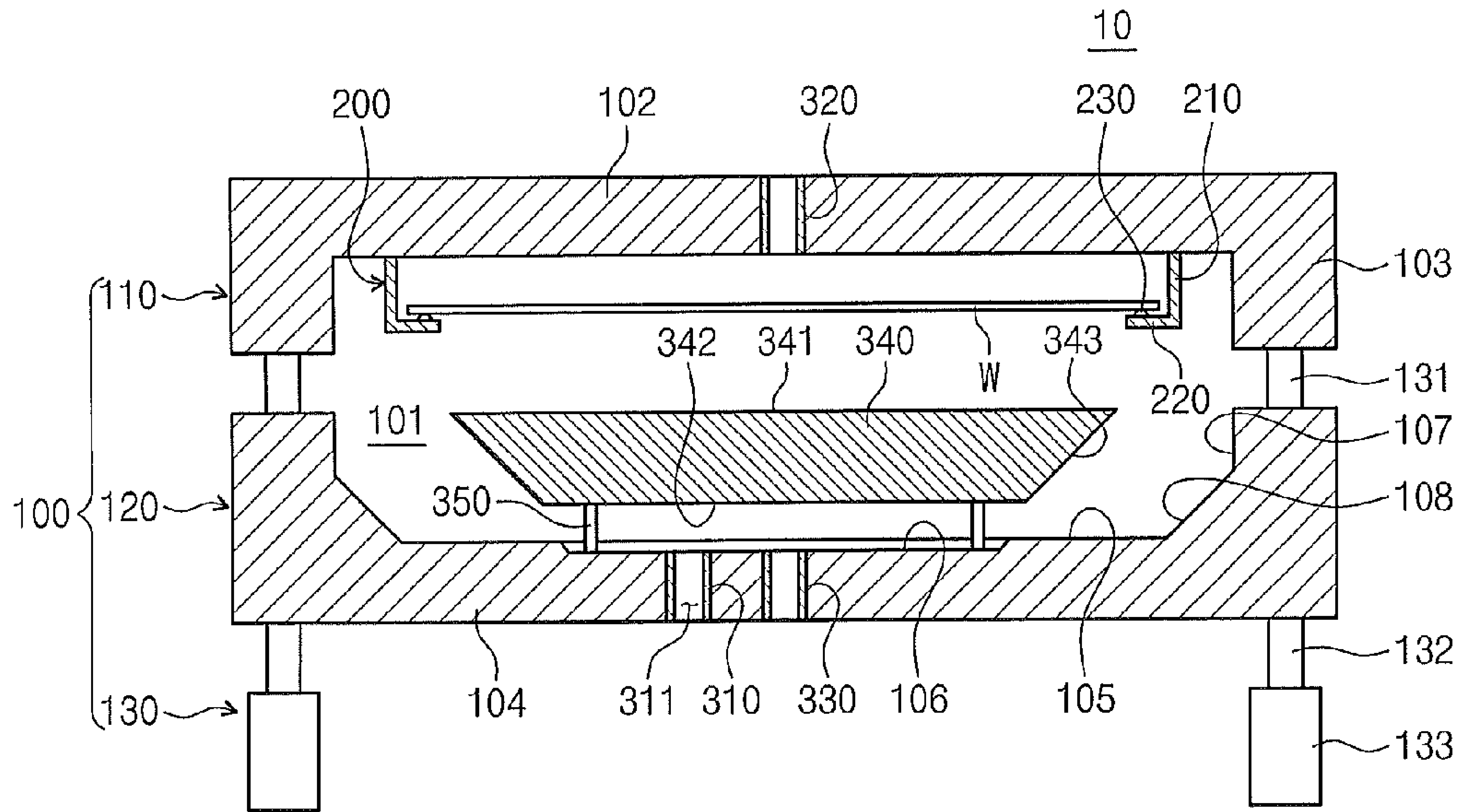


Fig. 2

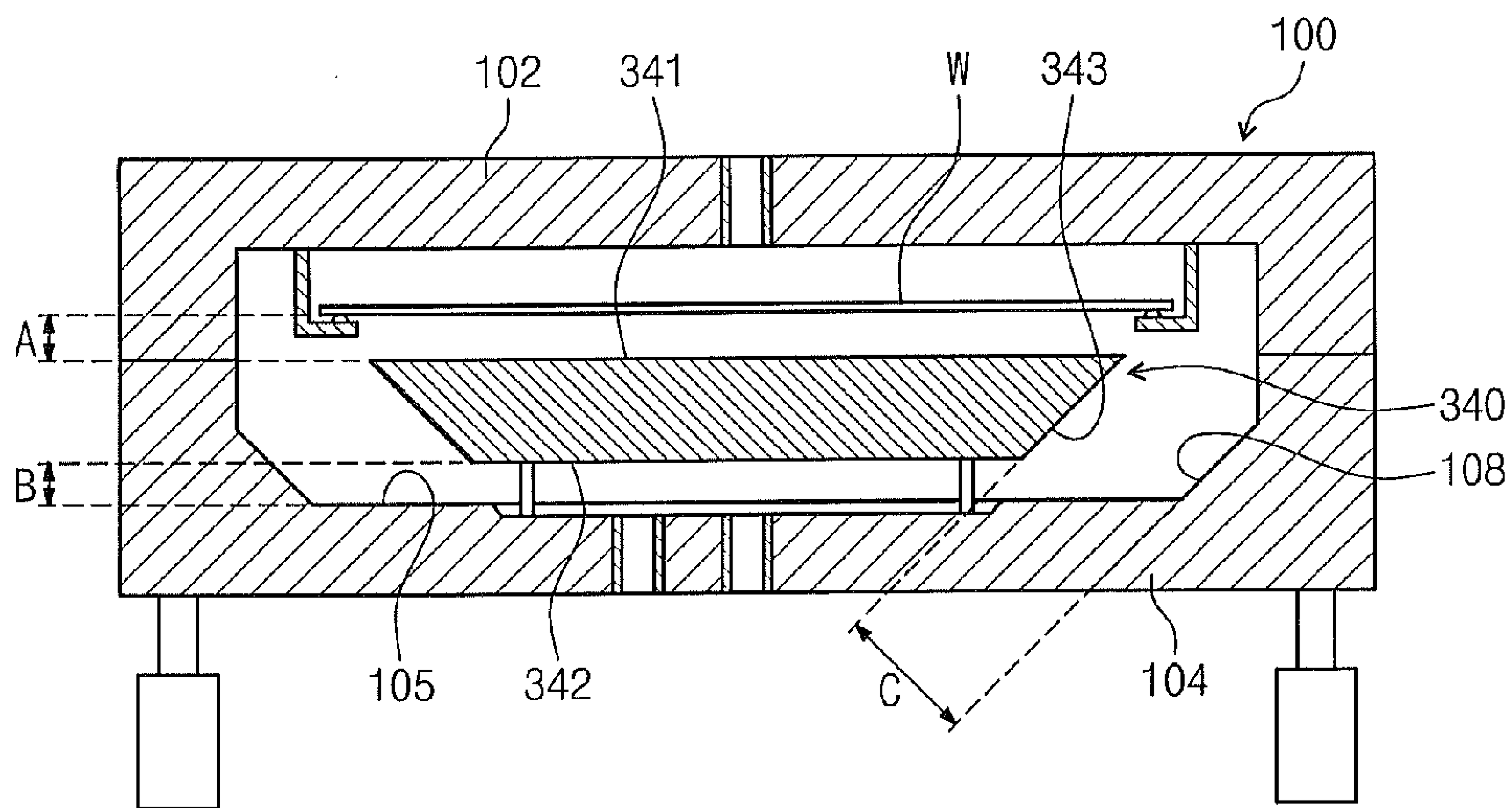


Fig. 3

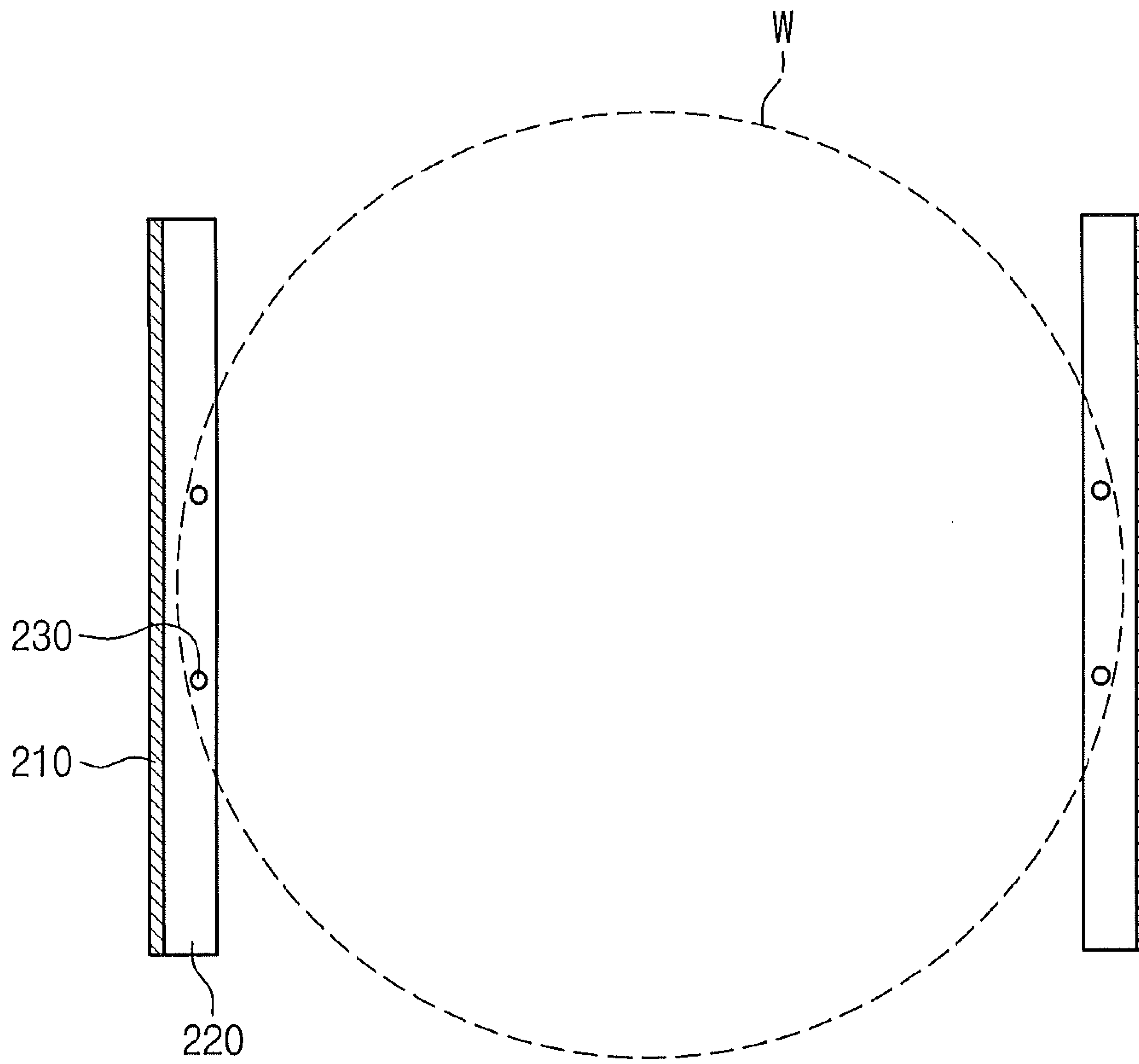


Fig. 4

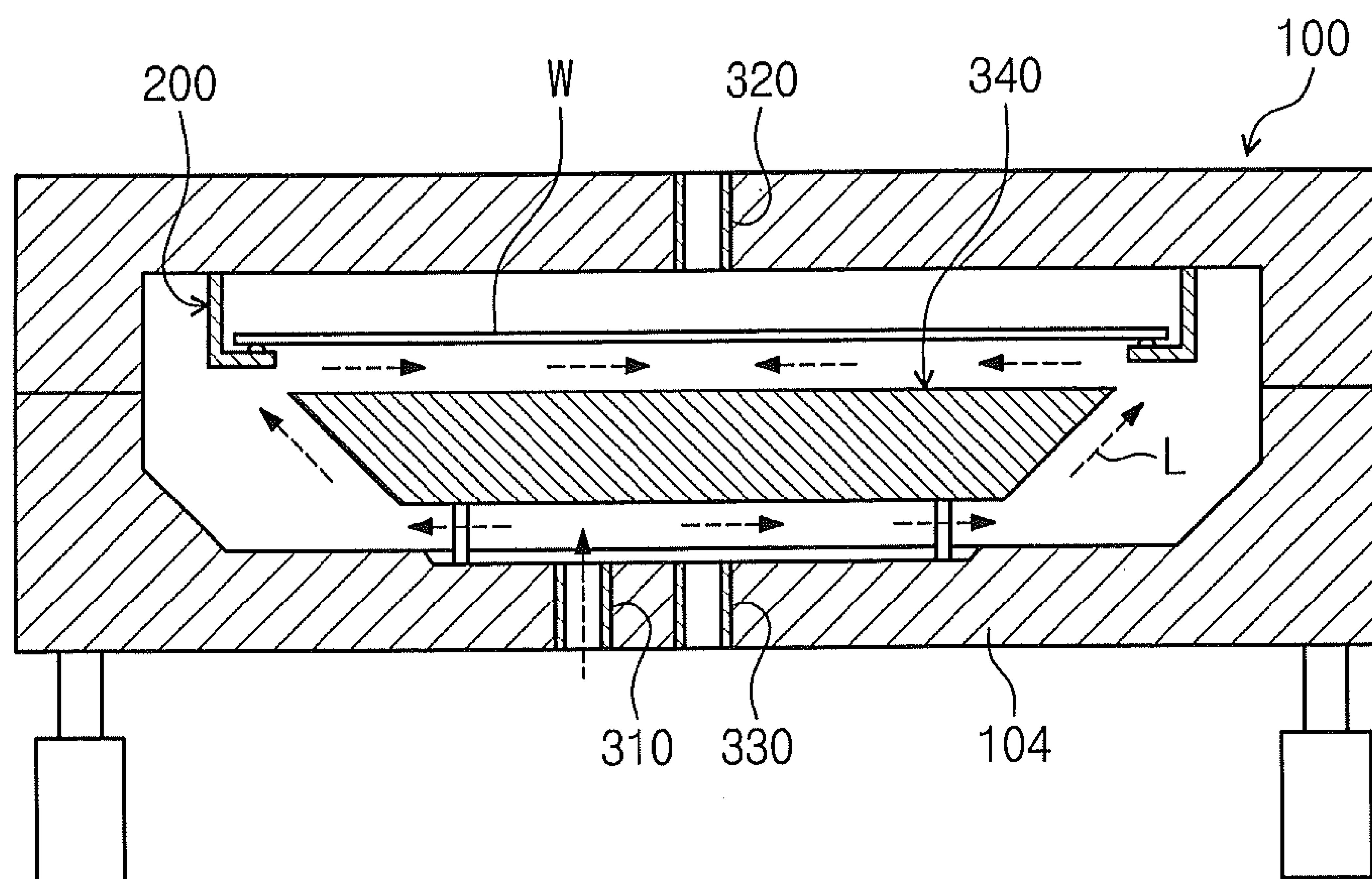


Fig. 5

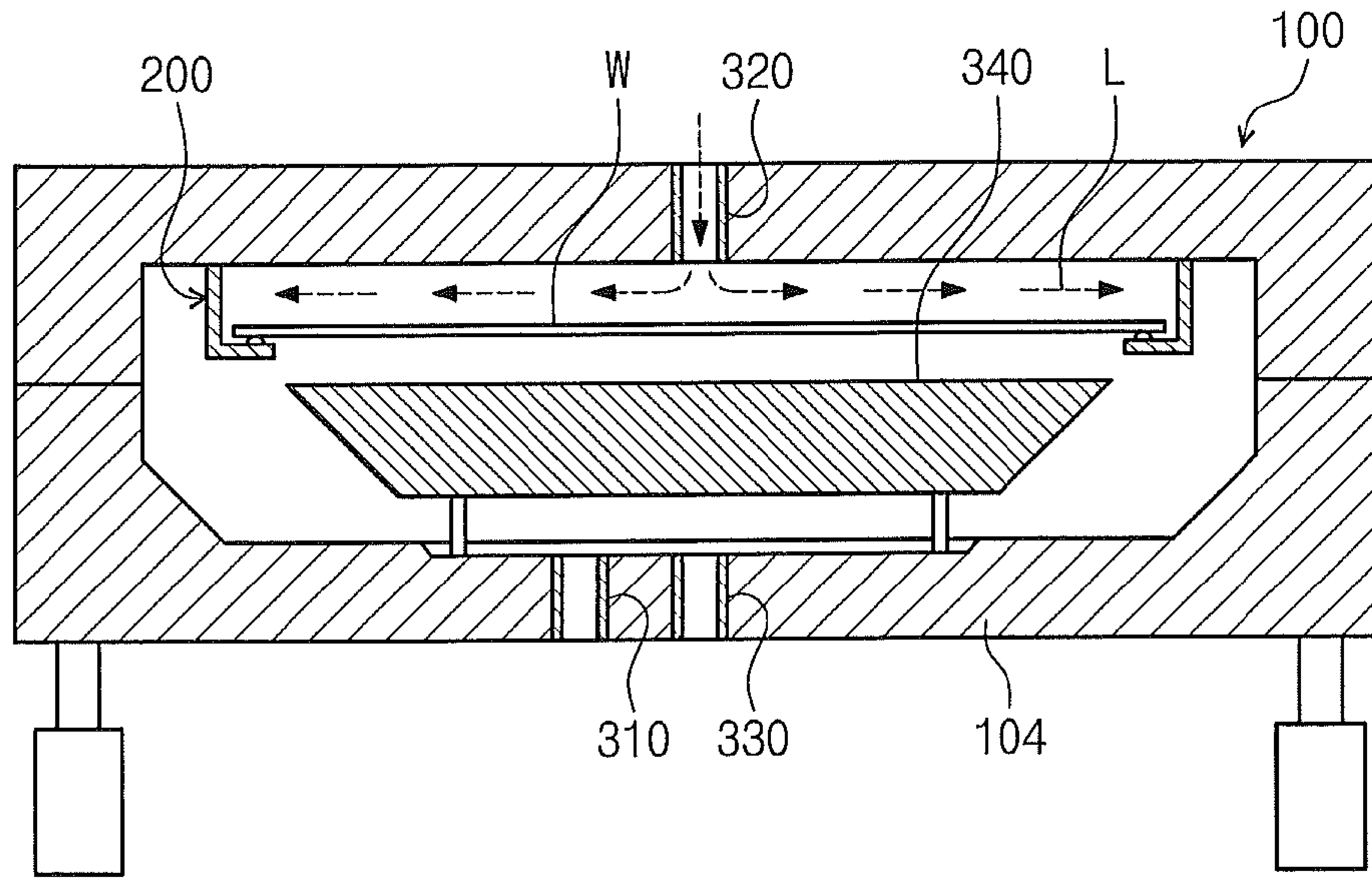


Fig. 6

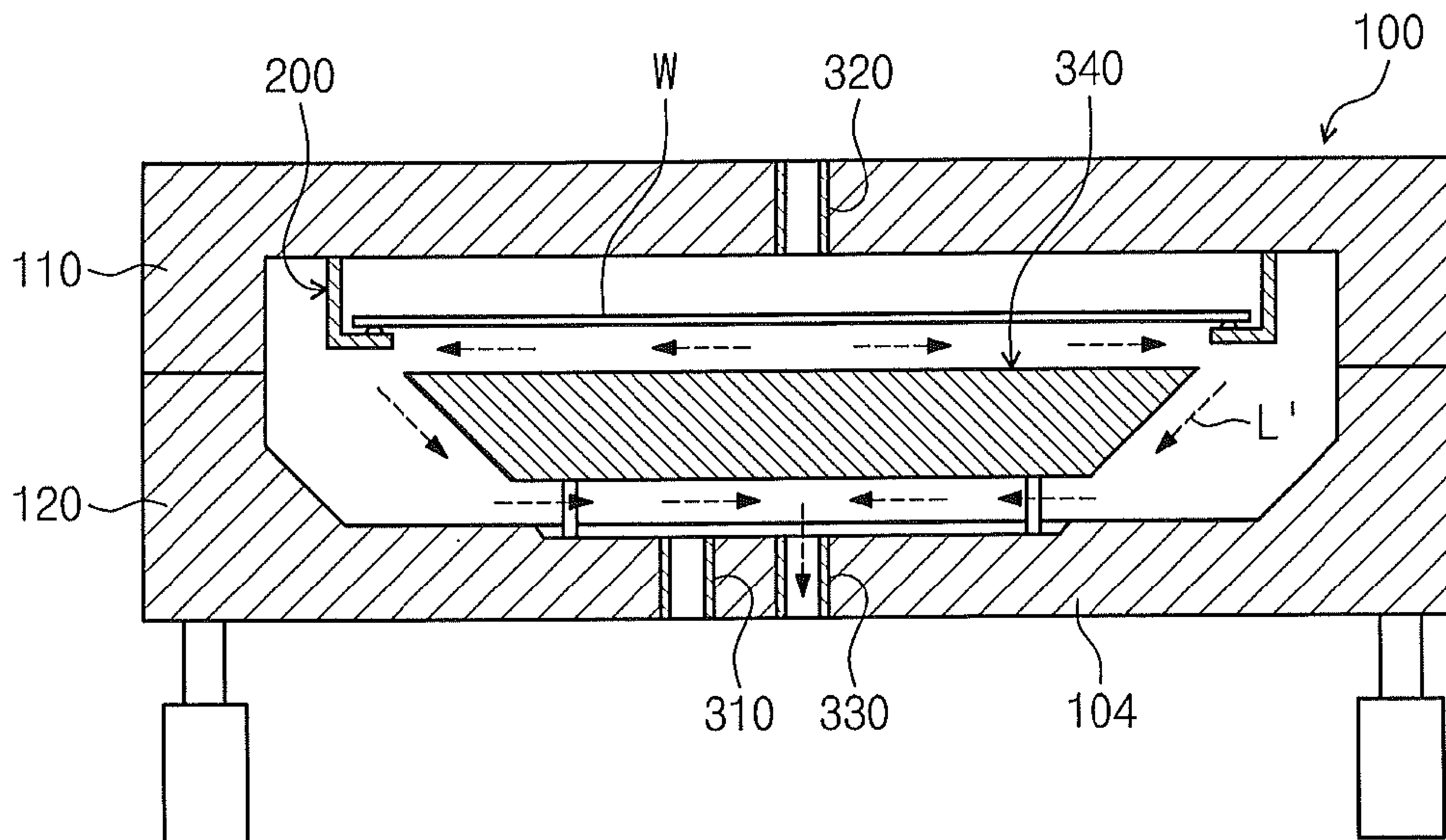


Fig. 7

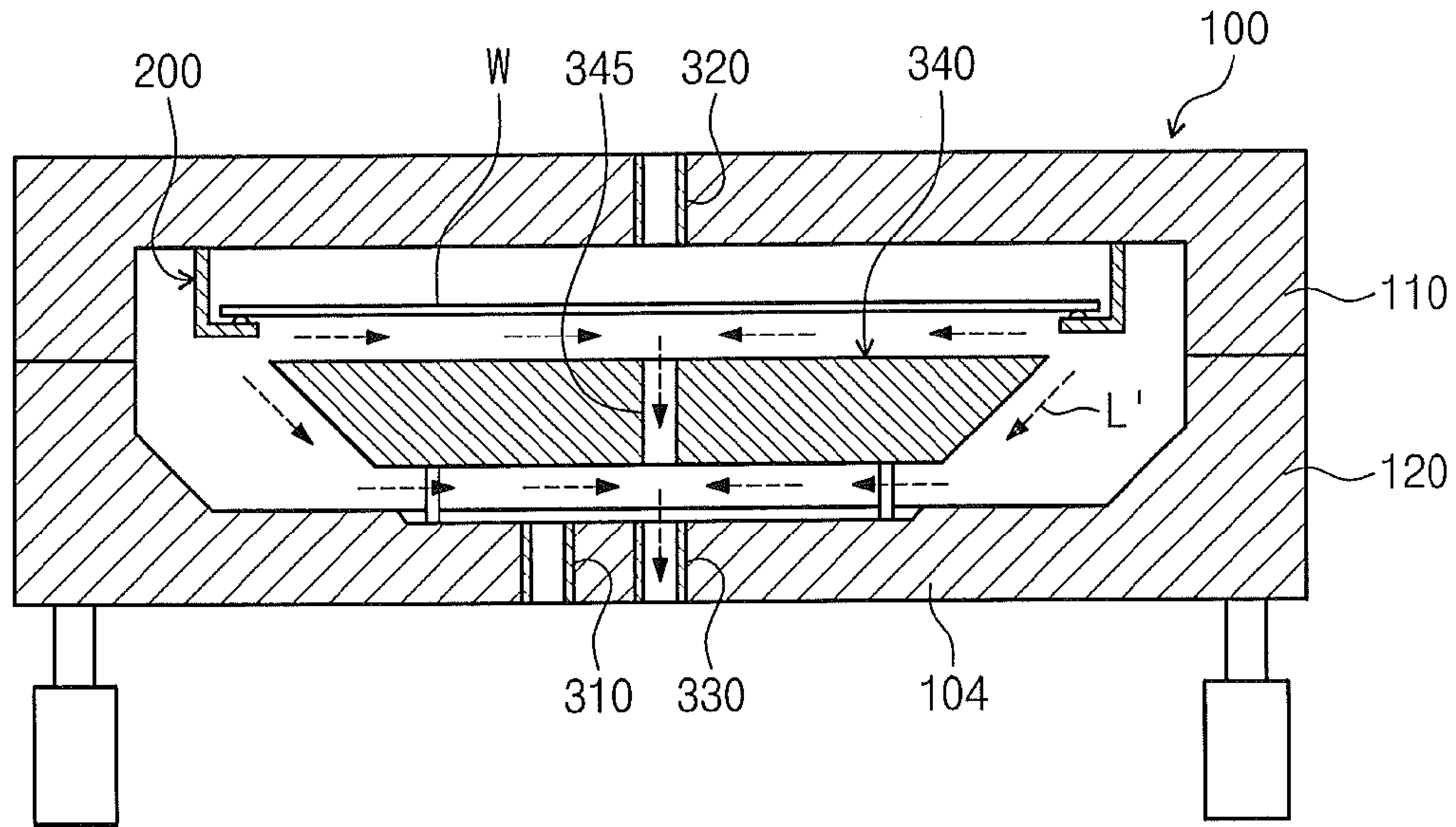


Fig. 8

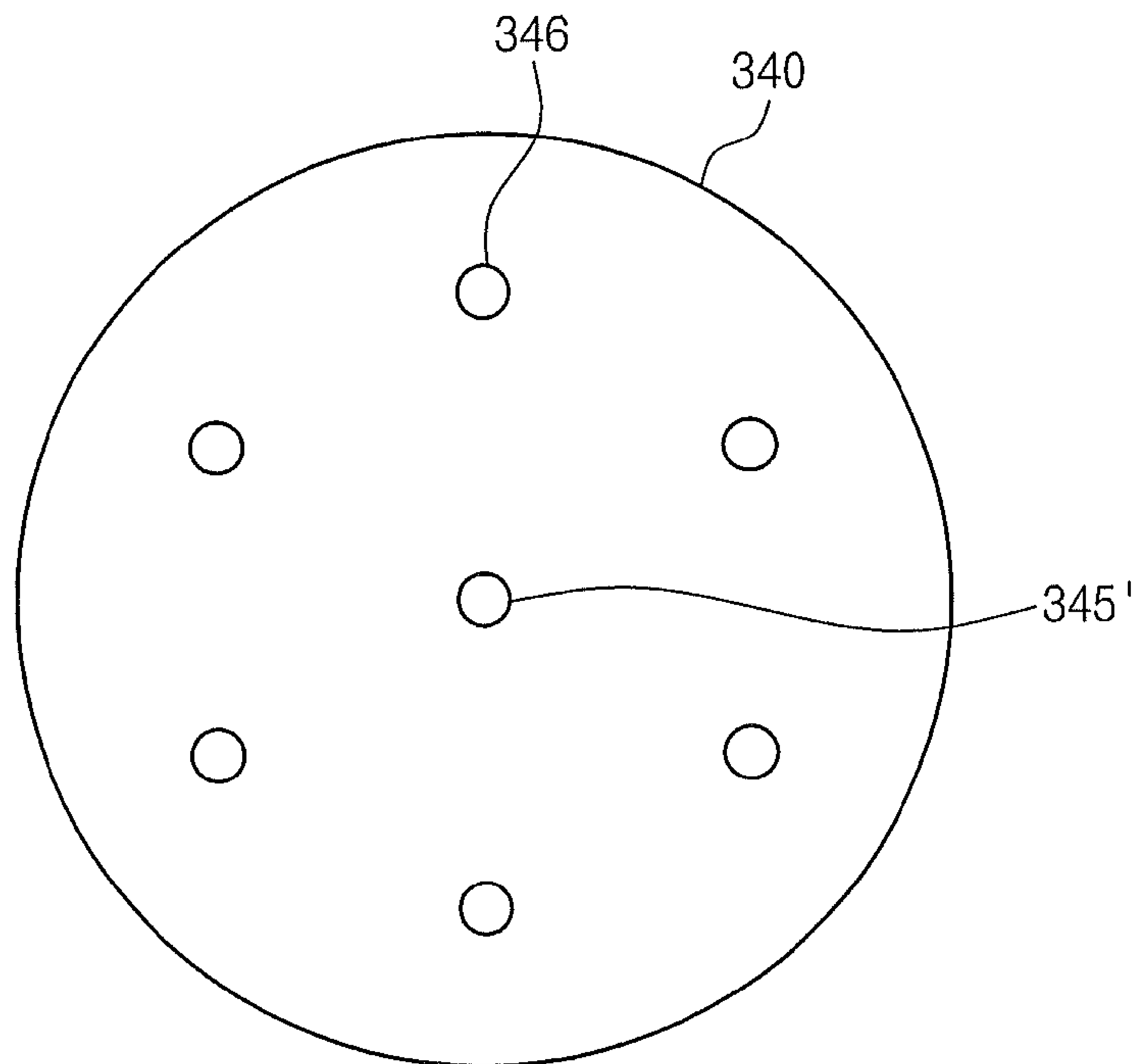


Fig. 9

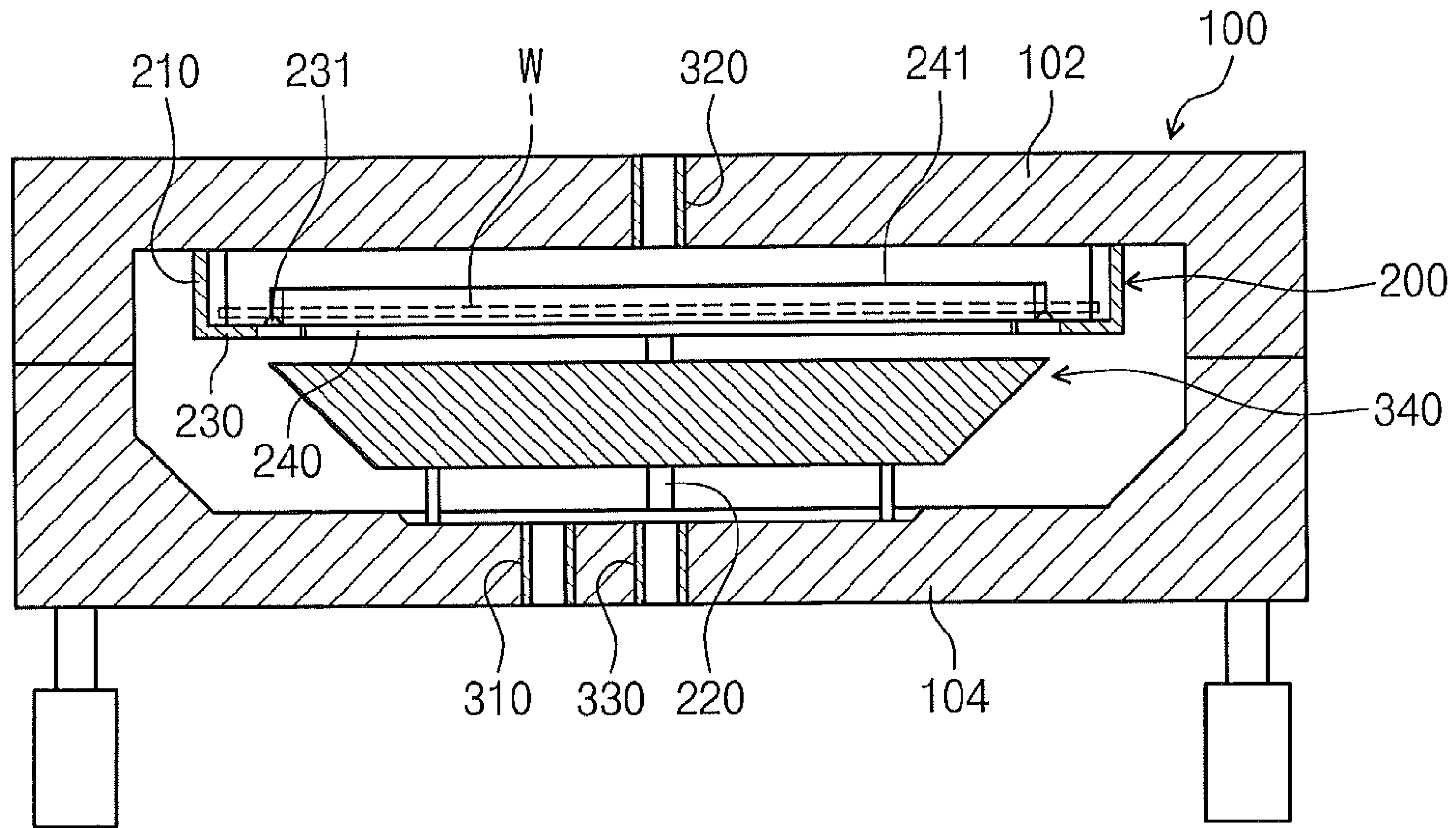


Fig. 10

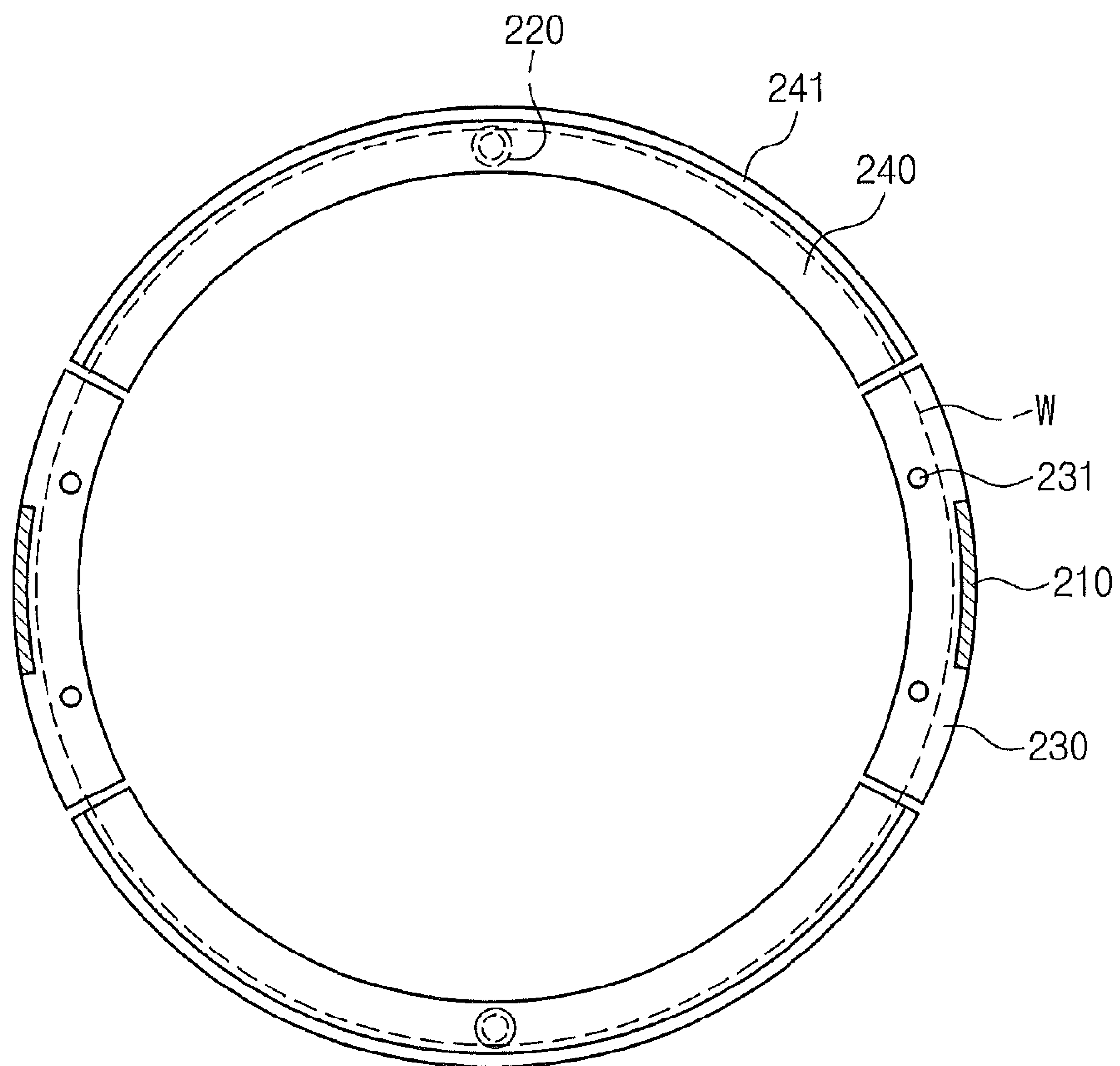


Fig. 11

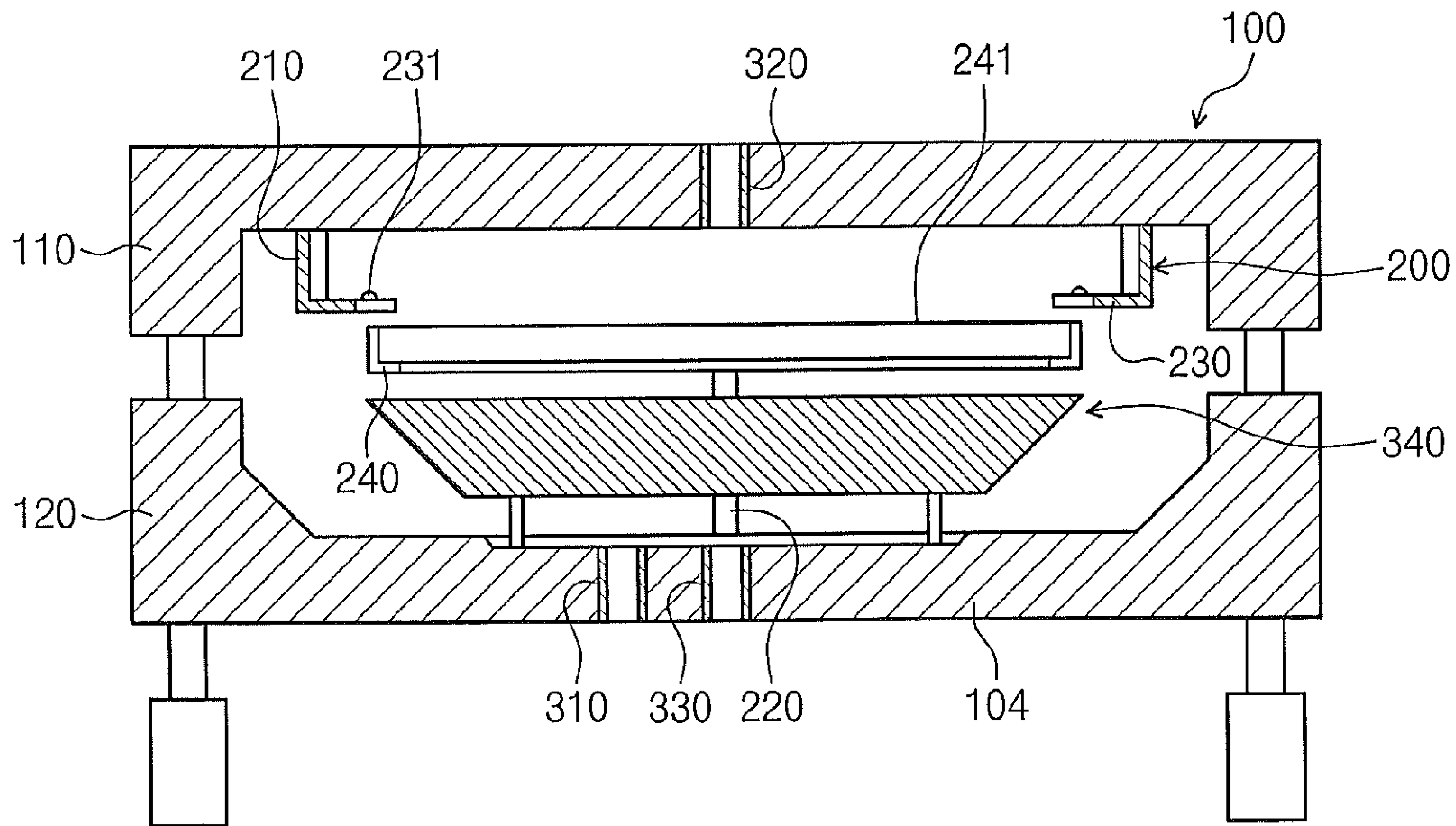
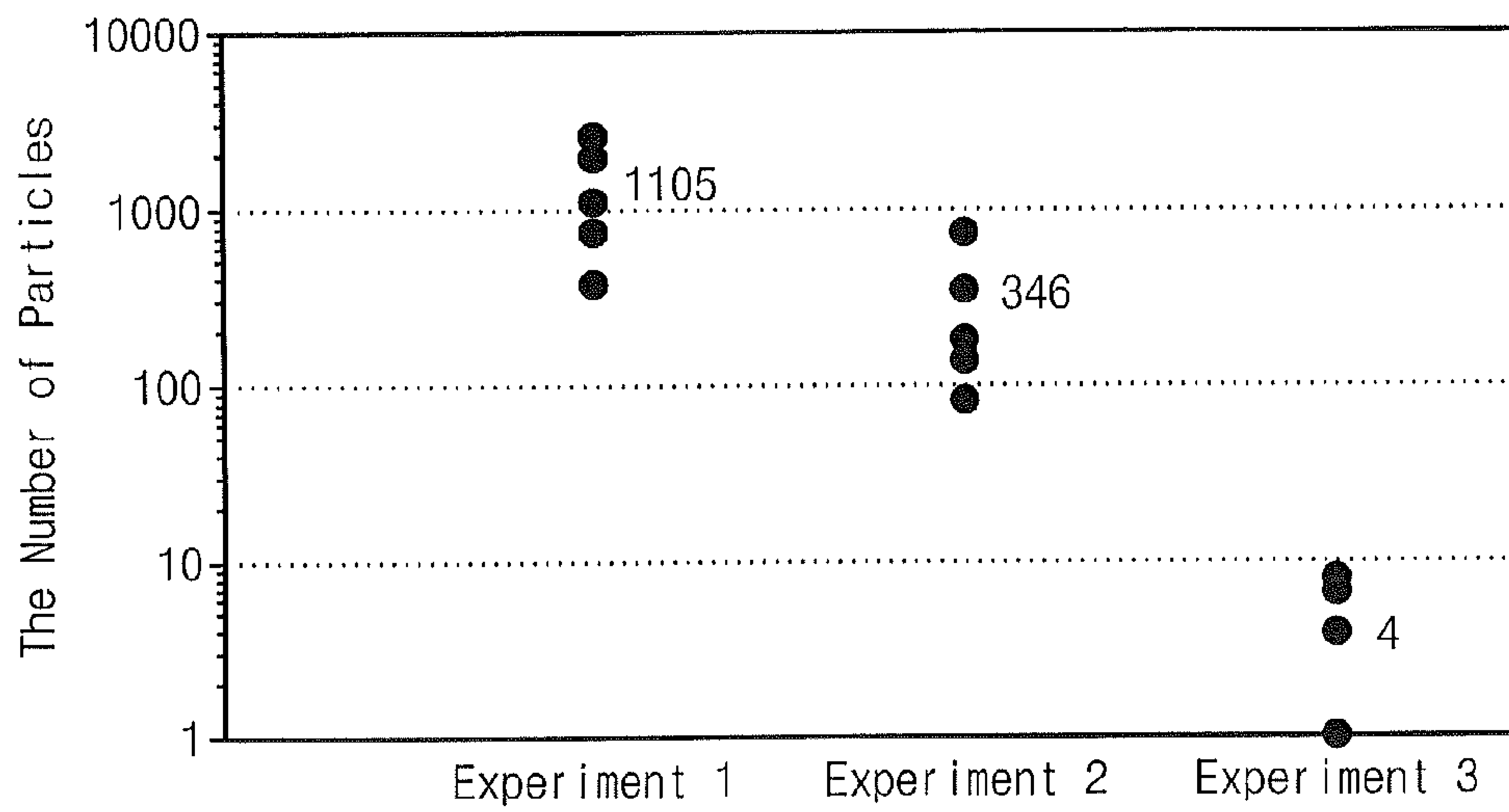


Fig. 12



APPARATUS AND METHODS FOR TREATING A SUBSTRATE

REFERENCE TO PRIORITY APPLICATION

This application claims priority under 35 U.S.C. §119 to Korean Patent Application No. 10-2011-0130385, filed on Dec. 7, 2011, the disclosure of which is hereby incorporated by reference herein in its entirety.

FIELD

Embodiments of the inventive concepts relate to apparatus and methods for treating a substrate, and more particularly, to apparatus and methods for drying a substrate using supercritical fluid.

BACKGROUND

The fabrication of a semiconductor device includes a cleaning process of removing a pollutant from a substrate or wafer. The cleaning process includes a chemical treatment step of removing a pollutant from a substrate using a chemical material, a rinse step of removing the chemical material from the substrate using a rinse solution, and a drying step of drying the rinse solution from the substrate.

In the drying step, an organic solvent may be supplied to a surface of the substrate to substitute the rinse solution, and then the substrate may be heated. However, in the case that the semiconductor device includes a circuit pattern having a small width, a pattern collapse phenomenon may occur wherein the circuit patterns are damaged or destroyed during the drying step.

SUMMARY

Embodiments of the inventive concepts provide apparatus and methods for drying a substrate effectively.

According to some embodiments of the inventive concept, a substrate drying apparatus may include a process chamber having an internal space, a substrate supporting member disposed in the process chamber to support a substrate, a first supplying port configured to supply a supercritical fluid to a region of the internal space located below the substrate, a second supplying port configured to supply a supercritical fluid to a region of the internal space located above the substrate, and an exhaust port configured to exhaust the supercritical fluid from the process chamber to an exterior region.

According to some other embodiments of the inventive concept, a method of drying a substrate may include: positioning a substrate in a process chamber; supplying a supercritical fluid into a lower internal space of the process chamber positioned below the substrate to increase an internal pressure of the process chamber beyond the atmospheric pressure; and then supplying the supercritical fluid into an upper internal space of the process chamber positioned over the substrate to dry the substrate.

According to some other embodiments of the inventive concept, a substrate drying apparatus may include: a process chamber having an internal space; a substrate supporting member disposed in the internal space of the process chamber, the substrate supporting member configured to receive and support a substrate; a blocking plate disposed in the internal space of the process chamber below the substrate supporting member; a first supplying port; a second supplying port; and an exhaust port. The first supplying port may extend through a bottom wall of the process chamber and be configured to supply a supercritical fluid to a bottom surface of the blocking plate and to a region of the internal space located below the substrate and above a top surface of the blocking plate. The second supplying port may extend through a top wall of the process chamber and be configured to supply a supercritical fluid to a region of the internal space located above the substrate. The exhaust port may extend through the bottom wall of the process chamber and be configured to exhaust the supercritical fluid from the process chamber to an exterior region.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Exemplary embodiments will be more clearly understood from the following brief description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings. FIGS. **1** through **12** represent non-limiting, exemplary embodiments as described herein.

FIG. **1** is a sectional view illustrating a substrate treatment apparatus according to some embodiments of the inventive concept;

FIG. **2** is a sectional view illustrating a process chamber, in a sealed state, of the apparatus of FIG. **1**;

FIG. **3** is a plan view illustrating a substrate supporting member of the apparatus of FIG. **1**;

FIG. **4** is a diagram schematically illustrating a pressure raising step according to some embodiments of the inventive concept;

FIG. **5** is a diagram schematically illustrating a substrate drying step according to some embodiments of the inventive concept;

FIG. **6** is a diagram schematically illustrating an exhausting step according to some embodiments of the inventive concept;

FIG. **7** is a diagram schematically illustrating an exhausting step according to some other embodiments of the inventive concept;

FIG. **8** is a plan view illustrating a blocking plate according to some other embodiments of the inventive concept;

FIG. **9** is a sectional view illustrating a substrate drying apparatus according to some other embodiments of the inventive concept;

FIG. **10** is a plan view illustrating a substrate supporting member of the apparatus of FIG. **9**;

FIG. **11** is sectional view illustrating a process chamber, in an open state, of the apparatus of FIG. **9**; and

FIG. **12** is a graph showing the relationship between a difference in structure of a blocking plate and the consequential technical effect.

It should be noted that these figures are intended to illustrate the general characteristics of methods, structure and/or materials utilized in certain exemplary embodiments and to supplement the written description provided below. These drawings are not, however, to scale and may not precisely reflect the precise structural or performance characteristics of any given embodiment, and should not be interpreted as defining or limiting the range of values or properties encompassed by the exemplary embodiments. For example, the relative thicknesses and positioning of molecules, layers, regions and/or structural elements may be reduced or exaggerated for clarity. The use of similar or identical reference numbers in the various drawings is intended to indicate the presence of a similar or identical element or feature.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Embodiments of the inventive concepts will now be described more fully with reference to the accompanying

drawings, in which exemplary embodiments are shown. Embodiments of the inventive concepts may, however, be embodied in many different forms and should not be construed as being limited to the embodiments set forth herein; rather, these embodiments are provided so that this disclosure will be thorough and complete, and will fully convey the scope of the inventive concepts to those of ordinary skill in the art. In the drawings, the thicknesses of layers and regions may be exaggerated for clarity. Like reference numerals in the drawings denote like elements, and thus their description may be omitted.

It will be understood that when an element is referred to as being "connected" or "coupled" to another element, it can be directly connected or coupled to the other element or intervening elements may be present. In contrast, when an element is referred to as being "directly connected" or "directly coupled" to another element, there are no intervening elements present. Like numbers indicate like elements throughout. As used herein the term "and/or" includes any and all combinations of one or more of the associated listed items. Other words used to describe the relationship between elements or layers should be interpreted in a like fashion (e.g., "between" versus "directly between," "adjacent" versus "directly adjacent," "on" versus "directly on").

It will be understood that, although the terms "first", "second", etc. may be used herein to describe various elements, components, regions, layers and/or sections, these elements, components, regions, layers and/or sections should not be limited by these terms. These terms are only used to distinguish one element, component, region, layer or section from another element, component, region, layer or section. Thus, a first element, component, region, layer or section discussed below could be termed a second element, component, region, layer or section without departing from the teachings of the exemplary embodiments.

Spatially relative terms, such as "beneath," "below," "lower," "above," "upper" and the like, may be used herein for ease of description to describe one element or feature's relationship to another element(s) or feature(s) as illustrated in the figures. It will be understood that the spatially relative terms are intended to encompass different orientations of the device in use or operation in addition to the orientation depicted in the figures. For example, if the device in the figures is turned over, elements described as "below" or "beneath" other elements or features would then be oriented "above" the other elements or features. Thus, the exemplary term "below" can encompass both an orientation of above and below. The device may be otherwise oriented (rotated 90 degrees or at other orientations) and the spatially relative descriptors used herein interpreted accordingly.

The terminology used herein is for the purpose of describing particular embodiments only and is not intended to be limiting of the inventive concepts. As used herein, the singular forms "a," "an" and "the" are intended to include the plural forms as well, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise. It will be further understood that the terms "comprises", "comprising", "includes" and/or "including," if used herein, specify the presence of stated features, integers, steps, operations, elements and/or components, but do not preclude the presence or addition of one or more other features, integers, steps, operations, elements, components and/or groups thereof.

Embodiments of the inventive concepts are described herein with reference to schematic illustrations of exemplary embodiments (and intermediate structures). As such, variations from the shapes of the illustrations as a result, for example, of manufacturing techniques and/or tolerances, are to be expected. Thus, embodiments of the inventive concepts should not be construed as limited to the particular shapes of regions illustrated herein but are to include deviations in shapes that result, for example, from manufacturing. For example, an implanted region illustrated as a rectangle may have rounded or curved features and/or a gradient of implant concentration at its edges rather than a binary change from implanted to non-implanted region. Likewise, a buried region formed by implantation may result in some implantation in the region between the buried region and the surface through which the implantation takes place. Thus, the regions illustrated in the figures are schematic in nature and their shapes are not intended to necessarily illustrate the actual shape of a region of a device and are not intended to limit the scope of the inventive concepts.

Unless otherwise defined, all terms (including technical and scientific terms) used herein have the same meaning as commonly understood by one of ordinary skill in the art to which embodiments of the inventive concepts belong. It will be further understood that terms, such as those defined in commonly-used dictionaries, should be interpreted as having a meaning that is consistent with their meaning in the context of the relevant art and will not be interpreted in an idealized or overly formal sense unless expressly so defined herein.

FIG. **1** is a sectional view illustrating a substrate treatment apparatus according to some embodiments of the inventive concept, and FIG. **2** is a sectional view illustrating a process chamber, in a sealed state, of the apparatus of FIG. **1**.

Referring to FIGS. **1** and **2**, a substrate treatment apparatus **10** may be configured to dry a wafer or substrate W, such as when a rinse process has been finished. In some embodiments, the substrate treatment apparatus **10** may be configured to dry the wafer W using supercritical fluid. The supercritical fluid may be used to dissolve and dry dregs of rinse solution (e.g., organic solvent), which may remain on a surface of the wafer W after the rinse process. In some embodiments, the supercritical fluid may be a carbon dioxide (CO_2) in a supercritical state. The carbon dioxide reaches its supercritical state at a temperature of 30° C. or more and a pressure of 7.4 MPa or more. For the sake of simplicity, much of the description that follows will refer to embodiments in which the supercritical fluid is carbon dioxide in a supercritical state.

The substrate treatment apparatus **10** may include a process chamber **100**, a substrate supporting member **200**, a first supplying port **310**, a second supplying port **320**, an exhaust port **330**, and a blocking plate **340**.

The process chamber **100** may define or provide a space in which a drying process on the wafer W is performed. For example, an internal space **101** may be provided in the process chamber **100**. The process chamber **100** may be configured to be able to endure temperature and pressure that are higher than a critical temperature and a critical pressure of a supercritical fluid in use. The process chamber **100** may include an upper chamber **110**, a lower chamber **120**, and a chamber driving part **130**.

The upper chamber **110** may be configured to have a space whose bottom is open (i.e., an open bottom portion). In some embodiments, a top wall of the upper chamber **110** may serve as a top wall **102** of the process chamber **100**. A sidewall of the upper chamber **110** may be provided as a portion of a sidewall **103** of the process chamber **100**.

The lower chamber **120** may be disposed below the upper chamber **110**. In some embodiments, the lower chamber **120** may be configured to have a space whose top is open (i.e., an open top portion). The open top portion of the lower

chamber **120** may face the open bottom portion of the upper chamber **110**. A bottom wall of the lower chamber **120** may serve as a bottom wall **104** of the process chamber **100**. A sidewall of the lower chamber **120** may be provided as a portion of the sidewall **103** of the process chamber **100**.

The chamber driving part **130** may be configured to move at least one of the upper chamber **110** and the lower chamber **120** vertically. The internal space **101** of the process chamber **100** may be opened or closed by the vertical movement of the upper chamber **110** and/or the lower chamber **120**. In some embodiments, the chamber driving part **130** may be configured to open the internal space **101** of the process chamber **100** when the wafer W is loaded to or unloaded from the process chamber **100**, and to close the internal space **101** of the process chamber **100** when a drying step on the wafer W is to be performed. In some embodiments, the chamber driving part **130** may be configured to move the lower chamber **120** along a vertical direction (e.g., upwardly and/or downwardly).

The chamber driving part **130** may include a guide rod **131**, an elevating rod **132**, and a driver **133**. The guide rod **131** may be configured to connect a lower portion of the upper chamber **110** with an upper portion of the lower chamber **120**, and moreover, to guide the movement of the lower chamber **120** in such a way that the upper portion of the lower chamber **120** and the lower portion of the upper chamber **110** meet to seal the internal space **101** of the process chamber **100**. The elevating rod **132** may be provided below a lower portion of the lower chamber **120** and be configured to move upward or downward the lower chamber **120** using a driving force from the driver **133**. The driver **133** may be configured to seal the process chamber **100**, even when the internal space **101** of the process chamber **100** is in a high pressure state due to the supercritical fluid. In some embodiments, the driver **133** may comprise hydraulic equipment.

A heater (not shown) may be provided, in a buried manner, in at least one of the top wall **102**, the sidewall **103**, and the bottom wall **104** of the process chamber **100**. The process chamber **100** may be heated by the heater, such that the process chamber **100** can be maintained to have a temperature higher than a critical temperature of the supercritical fluid in the process chamber **100**.

The bottom wall **104** of the process chamber **100** may be formed to have a recessed portion **106**. The recessed portion **106** may be formed to have a predetermined depth. Due to the presence of the recessed portion **106**, the process chamber **100** may be formed to have an uneven inner bottom surface **105**.

The process chamber **100** may be formed to have an inclined inner side surface **108** (hereinafter, referred to as "inclined surface"). The inclined surface **108** may connect the inner bottom surface **105** of the process chamber **100** with a side surface **107** of the process chamber **100** (e.g., an inner side surface). Due to the presence of the inclined surface **108**, a width of the internal space **101** of the process chamber **100** may increase from the inner bottom surface **105** toward the side surface **107**. In various embodiments, an angle of the inclined surface **108** may range from about 10° to about 45°.

The substrate supporting member **200** may be provided in the process chamber **100** to support the wafer W. The substrate supporting member **200** may be configured to support a bottom edge portion of the wafer W. For example, a center portion of a bottom surface of the wafer W may be exposed by the substrate supporting member **200**. In some embodiments, the substrate supporting member **200** may be vertically spaced apart from the top wall **102** of the process chamber **100**.

FIG. **3** is a plan view illustrating a substrate supporting member of the apparatus of FIG. **1**.

Referring to FIGS. **1** through **3**, the substrate supporting member **200** may include at least one vertical rod or member **210** and at least one horizontal rod or member **220**. The vertical rod **210** may be perpendicular to and joined to the top wall **102** of the process chamber **100**. In some embodiments, the substrate supporting member **200** may include a pair of the vertical rods **210**, which may be horizontally spaced apart from each other.

In some embodiments, the substrate supporting member **200** may include a pair of the horizontal rods **220**, each of which may be joined to a bottom end portion of the corresponding one of the vertical rods **210**. The horizontal rod(s) **220** may be provided in the form of a thin plate or platform and be perpendicular to the vertical rod(s) **210**. One or more supporting protrusions **230** may be provided on top surfaces of the horizontal rods **220**. The supporting protrusion(s) **230** may protrude from the top surface of the horizontal rod **220**. There may be a plurality of the supporting protrusions **230** on each of the horizontal rods **220**. The wafer W may be laid on the supporting protrusions **230** and supported by the supporting protrusions **230** at an edge portion thereof.

The supercritical fluid may be supplied into the internal space **101** of the process chamber **100** through the first and second supplying ports **310** and **320**. The first supplying port **310** may be formed near a center of the bottom wall **104** of the process chamber **100**. A discharging hole **311** of the first supplying port **310** may be formed to penetrate a portion of the bottom wall **104** of the process chamber **100** provided with the recessed portion **106**. In some embodiments, the supercritical fluid may be supplied through the first supplying port **310** into a portion of the internal space **101** positioned below the wafer W.

The second supplying port **320** may be provided near a center of the top wall **102** of the process chamber **100**. The supercritical fluid may be supplied through the second supplying port **320** into a portion of the internal space **101** positioned above or over the wafer W. The supercritical fluid supplied through the second supplying port **320** may be provided onto a top surface of the wafer W.

The exhaust port **330** may be configured to exhaust a remaining fluid in the process chamber **100** to an external space. The exhaust port **330** may be provided through the bottom wall **104** of the process chamber **100**. The exhaust port **330** may be formed adjacent to the first supplying port **310**. In some embodiments, a supercritical fluid containing an organic solvent may be expelled or outgassed from the exhaust port **330**. The exhaust port **330** may be connected to a regeneration apparatus (not shown), which may be configured to separate the organic solvent from the supercritical fluid, but embodiments of the inventive concepts are not limited thereto.

The blocking plate **340** may be provided below the substrate supporting member **200**. In some embodiments, the blocking plate **340** may be provided in a form of a plate. The blocking plate **340** may include a top surface **341**, a bottom surface **342**, and a side surface **343**. The top surface **341** may be parallel to the bottom surface **342**. The top surface **341** may have an area greater than that of the bottom surface **342**. In the case in which the process chamber **100** is in a closed state, the top surface **341** of the blocking plate **340** may be disposed spaced apart from the bottom surface

of the wafer W by a predetermined space A. For example, the space A between the top surface **341** of the blocking plate **340** and the bottom surface of the wafer W may range from about 0.2 cm to about 1.0 cm. The bottom surface **342** may be disposed to face parallel to the inner bottom surface **105** of the process chamber **100**. The bottom surface **342** may be spaced apart from the inner bottom surface **105** of the process chamber **100** by a predetermined space B. For example, the space B between the bottom surface **342** and the inner bottom surface **105** of the process chamber **100** may range from about 0.1 cm to about 2 cm. The side surface **343** may be provided to connect the top surface **341** with the bottom surface **342**. In some embodiments, the side surface **343** may be inclined in such a way that a sectional area of the blocking plate **340** may increase from the bottom surface **342** upward to the top surface **341**. The side surface **343** may be parallel to the inclined surface **108**. The side surface **343** may be spaced apart from the inclined surface **108** by a predetermined space C. For example, the space C between the side surface **343** and the inclined surface **108** may range from about 0.1 cm to about 20 cm.

A space between the bottom surface **342** of the blocking plate **340** and the inner bottom surface **105** of the process chamber **100** may be connected to a space between the side surface **343** of the blocking plate **340** and the inclined surface **108** of the process chamber **100**, thereby providing a space through which the supercritical fluid supplied through the first supplying port **310** may flow. The supercritical fluid may be supplied onto the bottom surface **342** of the blocking plate **340** and then be moved and diffused into the internal space **101** of the process chamber **100** through a space between the blocking plate **340** and the process chamber **100**.

At least one supporting rod or member **350** may be provided below the blocking plate **340** to support the blocking plate **340**. For example, a plurality of the supporting rods **350** may be provided spaced apart from each other. A top end portion of each supporting rod **350** may be joined with the blocking plate **340** and a bottom end portion may be laid on the inner bottom surface **105** of the process chamber **100**. In some embodiments, the bottom end portions of the supporting rods **350** may be positioned in the recessed portion **106** of the inner bottom surface **105** of the process chamber **100**.

Hereinafter, a method of drying a substrate using the afore-described substrate treatment apparatus will be described with reference to the accompanying drawings. According to some embodiments of the inventive concept, a method of drying a substrate may include a pressure boosting or raising step, a drying step, and an exhausting step. In the pressure boosting step, a supercritical fluid may be supplied into the process chamber **100** in such a way that the process chamber **100** can have an internal pressure higher than an atmospheric pressure. In the drying step, the wafer W may be dried using a supercritical fluid supplied onto the top surface thereof under the boosted internal pressure condition. The exhausting step may be performed to exhaust a fluid remaining in the process chamber **100**, after the drying step, thereby reducing the internal pressure of the process chamber **100**.

FIG. **4** is a diagram illustrating a pressure raising step according to some embodiments of the inventive concept. Referring to FIG. **4**, a supercritical fluid L may be supplied into the process chamber **100** through the first supplying port **310**. The supercritical fluid L may be supplied onto the bottom surface **342** of the blocking plate **340** and flow through a space between the blocking plate **340** and the bottom wall **104** of the process chamber **100**. The blocking plate **340** may alter the flow of the supercritical fluid L injected through the first supplying port **310**. When the supercritical fluid L is directly injected onto a bottom surface of the wafer W, the wafer W may be deformed or depart from its original shape or position by a pressure exerted from the supercritical fluid L. However, the presence of the blocking plate **340** may prevent the supercritical fluid L from being directly supplied onto the wafer W, and thus, the afore-described problems can be prevented.

The supercritical fluid L may be diffused into the process chamber **100** through the space between the blocking plate **340** and the bottom wall **104** of the process chamber **100**. The internal pressure of the process chamber **100** may be increased by the supply of the supercritical fluid L. In some embodiments, the supercritical fluid L may be supplied at least until the internal pressure of the process chamber **100** reaches a critical pressure of the supercritical fluid L. If a supercritical fluid is supplied from the second supplying port **320** under the condition that the internal pressure of the process chamber **100** is less than the critical pressure, the supercritical fluid may be liquefied due to the low pressure and may freely fall on the top surface of the wafer W. This may lead to a decay of patterns provided on the wafer W.

The drying step may be performed under the condition that the internal pressure of the process chamber **100** is higher than the critical pressure.

FIG. **5** is a diagram schematically illustrating a substrate drying step according to some embodiments of the inventive concept. Referring to FIG. **5**, the supercritical fluid L may be supplied into the process chamber **100** through the second supplying port **320**. The supercritical fluid L supplied through the second supplying port **320** may be the same as that supplied through the first supplying port **310**. In some embodiments, the supercritical fluid L supplied from the second supplying port **320** may be directly supplied onto the top surface of the wafer W. An organic solvent, which may remain on the top surface of the wafer W, may be dissolved by the supercritical fluid, such that the wafer W can be dried. The supercritical fluid L may be supplied through the second supplying port **320** for a predetermined duration and then be interrupted.

FIG. **6** is a diagram schematically illustrating an exhausting step according to example embodiments of the inventive concept. Referring to FIG. **6**, the exhaust port **330** may be configured to exhaust a fluid L' remaining in the process chamber **100** to an exterior of the process chamber **100**. The exhaust of the remaining fluid L' may reduce the internal pressure of the process chamber **100**. The exhaust of the remaining fluid L' may be performed until the internal pressure of the process chamber **100** reaches the atmospheric pressure. In the case in which the internal pressure of the process chamber **100** is maintained at the atmospheric pressure, the lower chamber **120** may be lowered to open the internal space of the process chamber **100**. The wafer W, on which the drying process has finished, may be unloaded, such as by a delivery robot (not shown).

FIG. **7** is a diagram schematically illustrating an exhausting step according to some other embodiments of the inventive concept. Referring to FIG. **7**, a first exhaust aperture, hole or passageway **345** may be provided through the blocking plate **340**. The first exhaust hole **345** may include a through hole extending from the top surface of the blocking plate **340** to the bottom surface thereof. The first exhaust hole **345** may be formed near a center region of the blocking plate **340**. The first exhaust hole **345** may be provided on a vertical axis or line passing through the exhaust port **330**. During the drying step, the majority of the

fluid L' may stay on the top surface of the blocking plate **340**. In the substrate treatment apparatus of FIG. **6**, the fluid L' remaining on the blocking plate **340** may be flowed into the exhaust port **330** via a space between the blocking plate **340** and the bottom wall **104** of the process chamber **100**. In this case, a path for exhausting the fluid L' may be elongated, and the fluid L' may not be flow smoothly, since a space between the blocking plate **340** and the process chamber **100** may be narrow. However, in the substrate drying apparatus of FIG. **7**, the fluid L' remaining on the blocking plate **340** may directly flow into the exhaust port **330** via the first exhaust hole **345**. In other words, the path for exhausting the fluid L' can be shortened. Moreover, since the exhaust flowing paths **345** and **330** of the fluid L' may be formed along the same vertical axis or line (i.e., aligned), the fluid L' can more easily flow into the exhaust port **330**.

FIG. **8** is a plan view illustrating a blocking plate according to still other embodiments of the inventive concept. Referring to FIG. **8**, the blocking plate **340** may be formed to have a first exhaust aperture, hole or passageway **345'** and at least one second exhaust aperture, hole or passageway **346**. Similar to the first exhaust hole **345** shown in FIG. **7**, the first exhaust hole **345'** may be provided in a form of a through hole vertically penetrating the blocking plate **340** and be disposed on the same vertical axis or line passing through the exhaust port **330** of FIG. **7**. The second exhaust hole **346** may be provided in a form of a through hole vertically penetrating the blocking plate **340**. In some embodiments, the blocking plate **340** may include a plurality of the second exhaust holes **346**, which may be disposed around the first exhaust hole **345'**. A fluid remaining on or above the blocking plate **340** may easily flow through the first and second exhaust holes **345'** and **346** to the region positioned below the blocking plate **340**.

FIG. **9** is a sectional view illustrating a substrate drying apparatus according to some other embodiments of the inventive concept, and FIG. **10** is a plan view of the substrate supporting member shown in FIG. **9**.

Referring to FIGS. **9** and **10**, the substrate supporting member **200** may include first and second vertical rods or members **210** and **220**, and first and second horizontal rods or members **230** and **240**. A top end portion of the first vertical rod **210** may be joined to the top wall **102** of the process chamber **100**, and a bottom end portion thereof may be spaced apart from the top wall **102** of the process chamber **100** by a predetermined distance. In some embodiments, the substrate supporting member **200** may include a pair of the first vertical rods **210**, which may be disposed to face each other. In some embodiments, and as illustrated, the first vertical rods or members **210** may be elongated and/or arcuate.

Each first horizontal rod **230** may be joined to the bottom end portion of a respective first vertical rod **210**. Each of the first horizontal rods **230** may be provided in a form of an arc-shaped plate or platform. One or more supporting protrusions **231** may be provided on top surfaces of the first horizontal rods **230**. Each of the supporting protrusions **231** may protrude upward from a top surface of the first horizontal rod **230**. The wafer W may be loaded on the supporting protrusions **231**.

A bottom end portion of each second vertical rod **220** may be joined to the bottom wall **104** of the process chamber **100**, and a top end portion thereof may be spaced apart from the top wall **102** of the process chamber **100** by a predetermined distance.

Each second horizontal rod **240** may be joined to top end portion of a respective second vertical rod **220**. Each of the second horizontal rods **240** may be provided in a form of an arc-shaped plate or platform. The second horizontal rods **240** may be positioned at the same level as the first horizontal rods **230** when the process chamber **100** is closed. The second horizontal rods **240** may be disposed to form a ring-shaped structure along with the first horizontal rods **230**. A guide portion **241** may be provided on a top surface of each second horizontal rod **240**. The guide portion **241** may protrude upwardly from the top surface of the second horizontal rod **240** and be positioned outside of the wafer W supported by the supporting protrusion(s) **231**. The guide portion **241** may be provided in a form of an arc-shaped, elongated plate and have a length corresponding to that of the second horizontal rod **240**. The organic solvent may be provided in a form of fluid having high volatility and low viscosity, and thus, the organic solvent may flow down from the wafer W. In the case in which a surface of the wafer W is dried by using the organic solvent flowing down from the wafer W, the wafer W may be stained or there may be a spatial variation in terms of a dry amount of the wafer W. The vertical rod(s) **210** and the guide portion(s) **241** may be provided to surround bottom and side surfaces of the wafer W, and thus, the organic solvent can be inhibited or even prevented from flowing down from the wafer W. In addition, even before performing a drying step using a supercritical fluid, a portion of the organic solvent may remain on the wafer W, and thus, it is possible to prevent the organic solvent from being naturally dried.

As shown in FIG. **11**, in the case in which the lower chamber **120** is lowered to open the internal space of the process chamber **100**, the second vertical rod(s) **220** and the second horizontal rod(s) **240** may be lowered along with the lower chamber **120**. The wafer W may be loaded into the process chamber **100** such as by laying the wafer W on the supporting protrusions **231**. In the case in which the lower chamber **120** is elevated to close the internal space of the process chamber **100**, the second vertical rod(s) **220** and the second horizontal rod(s) **240** may be elevated along with the lower chamber **120**. The guide portion **241** of the second horizontal rod **240** may then be located at an outside portion of the wafer W.

FIG. **12** is a graph showing the relationship between a difference in structure of a blocking plate and the consequential technical effect. The vertical axis of FIG. **12** represents the number of particles produced on surfaces of wafers, and the horizontal axis represents three different experiments.

In the experiment **1**, the blocking plate **340** was configured not to have the first exhaust hole **345** of FIG. **7**. A space between the top surface **341** of the blocking plate **340** and the bottom surface of the wafer W was 1.5 mm, and a space between the bottom surface **342** of the blocking plate **340** and the inner bottom surface **105** of the process chamber **100** was 3 mm, and a space between the side surface **343** of the blocking plate **340** and the inclined surface **108** of the process chamber **100** was 1.5 mm.

In the experiment **2**, the blocking plate **340** was configured to have the first exhaust hole **345** of FIG. **7**. The space between the top surface **341** of the blocking plate **340** and the bottom surface of the wafer W, the space between the bottom surface **342** of the blocking plate **340** and the inner bottom surface **105** of the process chamber **100**, and the space between the side surface **343** of the blocking plate **340** and the inclined surface **108** of the process chamber **100** were equal to those of the experiment **1**.

In the experiment **3**, the blocking plate **340** was configured not to have the first exhaust hole **345** of FIG. **7**. The

space between the top surface **341** of the blocking plate **340** and the bottom surface of the wafer W was 4 mm, the space between the bottom surface **342** of the blocking plate **340** and the inner bottom surface **105** of the process chamber **100** was 3 mm, and the space between the side surface **343** of the blocking plate **340** and the inclined surface **108** of the process chamber **100** was 3 mm.

A comparison of the results of the experiment **2** with those of the experiment **1** indicates that the first exhaust hole **345** of the blocking plate **340** can contribute in reducing the number of particles produced during the drying process. In this sense, it can be understood that the exhaust hole **345** facilitates an exhausting flow of a fluid.

A comparison of the results of the experiment **3** with those of the experiment **1** indicates that the number of particles produced on a wafer decreases with increasing the spaces (between the top surface **341** and the bottom surface of the wafer W, between the bottom surface **342** and the inner bottom surface **105**, and between the side surface **343** and the inclined surface **108**). In other words, an exhausting flow of a fluid can be facilitated by increasing the spaces. However, if the spaces increase beyond reasonable levels, there may be an accompanying increase in the internal space of the process chamber **100**. This means that a process time may increase to increase an internal pressure of the process chamber **100** up to the critical pressure. In other words, the spaces may be designed in light of structural factors affecting the exhausting flow as well as the process time required for increasing the internal pressure of the process chamber **100**. For example, the space between the top surface **341** of the blocking plate **340** and the bottom surface of the wafer W may range from 0.2 cm to 1.0 cm, the space between the bottom surface **342** of the blocking plate **340** and the inner bottom surface **105** of the process chamber **100** may range from 0.1 cm to 4 cm, and the space between the side surface **343** of the blocking plate **340** and the inclined surface **108** of the process chamber **100** may range from 0.1 to 20 cm.

The organic solvent in the afore-described example embodiments may include isopropyl alcohol, ethyl glycol, 1-propanol, tetrahydraulic franc, 4-hydroxyl, 4-methyl, 2-pentanone, 1-butanol, 2-butanol, methanol, ethanol, n-propyl alcohol, dimethylether, and so forth.

According to some embodiments of the inventive concept, a supercritical fluid may be used to dissolve a rinse solution, which may remain on a substrate. As a result of the use of the supercritical fluid, the substrate can be effectively dried.

Depending on supplied fluid, a substrate treatment apparatus and method can be used not only drying process, but also another substrate treatment process.

While exemplary embodiments of the inventive concepts have been particularly shown and described, it will be understood by one of ordinary skill in the art that variations in form and detail may be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope of the attached claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A substrate treatment apparatus, comprising:

a process chamber having an internal space and at least one inclined inner side surface;

a substrate supporting member disposed in the process chamber to support a substrate;

a blocking plate disposed in the process chamber below the substrate supporting member, wherein the blocking plate has a bottom surface spaced apart from an internal bottom surface of the process chamber and at least one side surface;

a first supplying port formed through a bottom wall of the process chamber and configured to supply a supercritical fluid to a region of the internal space located below the substrate and to supply the supercritical fluid to the bottom surface of the blocking plate;

a second supplying port configured to supply a supercritical fluid to a region of the internal space located above the substrate; and

an exhaust port configured to exhaust the supercritical fluid from the process chamber to an exterior region,

wherein the at least one side surface of the blocking plate is parallel to the at least one inclined inner side surface of the process chamber.

2. The apparatus of claim **1**, wherein the exhaust port is formed through the bottom wall of the process chamber, and wherein the second supplying port is formed through a top wall of the process chamber.

3. The apparatus of claim **1**, wherein the substrate supporting member is configured to support a bottom edge portion of the substrate and expose a bottom center portion of the substrate.

4. The apparatus of claim **1**, wherein the substrate supporting member comprises:

a pair of spaced apart first vertical members, each first vertical member having a top end portion joined to a top wall of the process chamber; and

a pair of first horizontal members, each one joined to a bottom end portion of a respective first vertical member and having a top surface provided with at least one supporting protrusion on which the substrate is laid.

5. The apparatus of claim **1**, wherein the internal bottom surface of the process chamber includes a recessed portion under the blocking plate.

6. The apparatus of claim **5**, further comprising a plurality of supporting members provided below the blocking plate to support the blocking plate, the plurality of supporting members disposed within the recessed portion.

7. The apparatus of claim **5**, wherein the blocking plate has a first width extending parallel to the internal bottom surface of the process chamber and the recessed portion has a second width extending parallel to the first width, the first width greater than the second width.

8. The apparatus of claim **5**, wherein at least one of the first supplying port and the exhaust port penetrates through a bottom wall of the recessed portion.

9. The apparatus of claim **5**, wherein the process chamber includes an internal side surface having a vertical side surface and an inclined side surface,

wherein a top of the inclined side surface is at a same level as a portion of the blocking plate, and

wherein a bottom of the inclined side surface is at a same level as a top of the recessed portion of the process chamber.

10. The apparatus of claim **9**, wherein the blocking plate includes a the bottom surface facing the internal bottom surface of the process chamber, a top surface facing the substrate, and a side surface facing the internal side surface of the process chamber.

11. The apparatus of claim **10**, wherein:

the bottom surface of the blocking plate is spaced apart from the internal bottom surface of the process chamber by a first space ranging from 0.1 cm to 2 cm; and

the top surface of the blocking plate is spaced apart from a bottom surface of the substrate by a second space ranging from 0.2 cm to 1.0 cm.

12. A substrate treating apparatus, comprising:

a process chamber having a top wall, a sidewall and a bottom wall defining an internal space;

a substrate supporting member disposed in the internal space of the process chamber, the substrate supporting member configured to receive and support a substrate;

a blocking plate disposed in the internal space of the process chamber below the substrate supporting member;

a first supplying port extending through the bottom wall of the process chamber and configured to supply a supercritical fluid to a bottom surface of the blocking plate and to a region of the internal space located below the substrate and above a top surface of the blocking plate;

a second supplying port extending through the top wall of the process chamber and configured to supply a supercritical fluid to a region of the internal space located above the substrate; and

an exhaust port extending through the bottom wall of the process chamber and configured to exhaust the supercritical fluid from the process chamber to an exterior region,

wherein the process chamber comprises an upper chamber in which the substrate sporting member is disposed and a lower chamber in which the blocking plate is disposed,

wherein the lower chamber comprises an inner bottom surface having a flat portion on an outer region of the inner bottom surface and a recess on a central region of the inner bottom surface that is adjacent the outer region, with the recess under the blocking plate.

13. The apparatus of claim 12, further comprising a plurality of supporting members provided in the recess to support the blocking plate.

14. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the blocking plate is spaced apart from the inner bottom surface of the lower chamber and overlaps the recess such that the recess is completely covered by the blocking plate.

15. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the lower chamber further comprises an inner side surface connected to the inner bottom surface, wherein a boundary between the inner side surface and the inner bottom surface has an inclined surface extending upwardly and away from the inner bottom surface.

16. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the inclined surface has an angle of 10° to 45° with respect to a vertical line extending from the inner bottom surface.

17. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the process chamber further comprises a chamber driving part configured to move at least one of the upper and lower chambers such that the process chamber is opened or closed by the vertical movement of at least one of the upper and lower chambers.

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